REMARKS

Claims 1-38 are pending, claims 1-38 having been amended. The amendments to claims 1, 19, and 34 find support in the specification, page 16, line 13 – page 17, line 4; page 29, line 10 – page 30, line 5; and FIGS. 2, 3, and 17, for example. The remaining claims were amended to be consistent with newly amended claims 1, 19, and 34. There are no issues of new matter.

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph, as being unclear. Claim 1 has been amended to replace the rejected language "a structure (1, 2)" with "storage means" and "processing means." Claim 34 has been similarly amended. Claim 2 has been amended to delete the annotated numbers. The other claims have been similarly amended. The rejection is believed to have been overcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 1 and 34 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Van Huben (US 5,812,130). Applicants traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 as amended recites a product design support system that supports a user in designing a product. The system comprises a number of elements in combination. The system includes storage means for storing information about products and processing means for receiving a predetermined specification of a product to be designed and for selectively extracting the information about the products from the storage means based on their compatibility with the specification of the product to be designed. The system advantageously provides products' stored information to assist the user in designing a new similar product.

In contrast, Van Huben discloses a data management system and method for integrating the design, development, and manufacture of electronics. See, e.g., Van Huben, 1:5-10; 2:42-45. Van Huben discloses creating a design model using information about model components that is stored in a repository. See, e.g., Van Huben, 10:53-65; 11:9-53. The information may include the name of a component and the location where the component is stored. Id. Van Huben also discloses that the created model is tracked throughout the design, development, and manufacturing processes of the corresponding electronics. See, e.g., Van Huben, 29:18-20.

However, Van Huben fails to disclose or suggest the combination of elements defined by Applicants' claim 1, in particular a combination including processing means that receives a predetermined specification of a product to be designed and selectively extracts information about stored products based on their compatibility with the specification. Van Huben does not disclose or suggest a combination that includes receiving a specification at all and, therefore, does not disclose or suggest a combination that includes selectively extracting stored information based on compatibility with the specification. Rather, Van Huben merely discloses a user inputting the names of stored components that the user wants to use to build the design model and the system retrieving the named components from the repository.

Therefore, claim 1 is not anticipated by Van Huben. The same reasoning applies to claim 34, which recites similar features to those of claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore requested.

Claims 1-38 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Katoh (US 6,173,433). Applicants traverse the rejection.

Katoh discloses a circuit design system, method, and medium to simplify the laying out of designs for optical circuits. See, e.g., Katoh, Abstract. Katoh discloses that a difficulty in laying out an optical circuit design is in connecting the curvilinear graphics. See, e.g., Katoh, 3:1-42. To solve this problem, Katoh discloses specifying and storing the desired positions of curvilinear connection points beforehand, computing possible paths connecting the points, and generating a design graphic of the circuit using the shortest of the possible paths. See, e.g., Katoh, 4:30-43.

However, Katoh fails to disclose or suggest the combination of elements defined by Applicants' claim 1, in particular a combination including processing means that receives a predetermined specification of a product to be designed and selectively extracts information about stored products based on their compatibility with the specification. Katoh does not disclose or suggest a combination that includes selectively extracting information about stored products based on compatibility with the specification. Rather, Katoh merely discloses generating the shortest path,

from among several possible paths, to connect two circuit points, which does not include selectively extracting information about stored circuits that are compatible with the desired circuit points.

Therefore, claim 1 and its dependent claims are not anticipated by Katoh. The same reasoning applies to claims 19 and 34, which recite similar features to those of claim 1, and their respective dependent claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore requested.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692008300.

Dated: November 30, 2007   Respectfully submitted,

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